

Judges Chapter 3 Part 6

//Review//

Before we get started, a little on “double entendre since it is part of the fabric of the book of Judges, even our passage in Judges chapter 3.

From Wikipedia:

“A double entendre (plural double entendres) is a figure of speech or a particular way of wording that is devised to have a double meaning, of which one is typically obvious, whereas the other often conveys a message that would be too socially awkward, sexually suggestive, or offensive to state directly.”

“A double entendre may exploit puns or word play to convey the second meaning. Double entendres generally rely on multiple meanings of words, or different interpretations of the same primary meaning. They often exploit ambiguity and may be used to introduce it deliberately in a text.”

The example of a double entendre given in Wikipedia:

“In Homer's The Odyssey, when Odysseus is captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus, he tells the Cyclops that his name is Oudeis (ουδεις = No-one). When Odysseus attacks the Cyclops later that night and stabs him in the eye, the Cyclops runs out of his cave, yelling to the other Cyclopes that "No-one has hurt me!", which leads the other Cyclopes to take no action under the assumption that Polyphemus blinded himself by accident, allowing Odysseus and his men to escape.”

One more item to consider. There are details in the text that are left out. It is my conviction, that the audience for the book of Judges is assumed to be familiar with the Torah. The double entendres require that the reader understand the dual meanings in some of the words. It also assumes that the reader can read between the lines. For instance, why would Eglon king of Moab agree to meet with Ehud unless he was already familiar

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with him? Josephus provides us this detail. But there are other details that we have to provide as we read through this section of Judges.

And still another thought I want to convey to you before getting started. Herman has said that Samson was a type of Christ. “Samson is one of the strongest Christ-types in all the Bible.” I am beginning to think that each of the God-commissioned deliverers in the book of Judges is a type of Christ from different perspectives. Othniel was just a straight-forward, God commissioned him, God caused the Holy Spirit to come upon him with the result that Othniel delivered (saved) the sons of Israel. Ehud is another God-commissioned deliverer. In his case, the vocabulary used points to the Levitical sacrifices. There is a correspondence between the vocabulary used to describe Ehud’s actions and the Levitical vocabulary used in sacrificial actions. We know from Hebrews chapter 10 that Jesus made the sacrifice that put an end to the sacrificial system. His sacrifice fulfilled the requirement of the Law. Turn to Hebrews chapter 10. Let us read so you see it in your own Bibles. The Levitical sacrifices were shadows, teaching aids pointing to Jesus Christ. So, I think, are the deliverers in the book of Judges. They were not perfect types of Christ. Several were very sinful men, like Samson. Yet, God was able to use each one to deliver or save the sons of Israel. Remember, the Hebrew word for delivered also means save. Jesus is the savior, deliverer. And by using the deliverers in the book of Judges, God is demonstrating His faithfulness, His mercy, His lovingkindness, His Grace. In the Old Testament, God is focused on the sons of Israel. Jesus in the New Testament provides the basis for the salvation for the human race. The missing ingredient is faith.

What do I mean by “type.” Dennis Mock, who wrote the textbooks Herman used to teach the pastor’s class said, “A type is an OT pattern, example, prefiguring, or foreshadowing of a NT person or event. [Special Rule#6/Typology - Dennis Mock]. There is a correspondence between an Old Testament person or event and a person or event in the New Testament.

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Revised literal translation of verses we have covered:

Judges 3:12 Now continued the sons of Israel to do evil in the eyes of the Lord (Yahweh). So the Lord (Yahweh) motivated Eglon (fatted calf) the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Judges 3:13 And he gathered (harvested) to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and defeated Israel, and they took possession of the city of the palms (Jericho).

Judges 3:14 And the sons of Israel served (as slaves) Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years.

Judges 3:15 But when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord (Yahweh), the Lord (Yahweh) commissioned a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite (literally “son of my right), a right-hand restricted man. And the sons of Israel sent by mission tribute (minha/sacrifice) by him (i.e. commissioned him to take) to Eglon the king of Moab.

Judges 3:16 Now Ehud made himself a (single use) sword which had two edges, a cubit in length, and he strapped it on his right thigh under his cloak (so that it was concealed).

Ehud made himself a sword. This begs the question, was Ehud a metalsmith? The implication from the text is that this was a sword made

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of metal. The sons of Israel did not yet have the capability to make iron. So this was likely a bronze sword. Whatever material it was made from, it only had to be used once to cut soft tissue and not for combat against another sword or armor. It was a single purpose sword. It was designed to kill Eglon (the fatted calf) king of Moab. Now as a point of reference, the tabernacle/temple utensils were made of bronze (Exodus 27:19). I do not know if the temple knives were two-edged or not. I cannot find any description of them.

A side note on brass versus bronze. I was confused about the difference. Both brass and bronze contain copper. But, brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. As some in the Middle East might say, “The same, but different.”

Ehud. This is the name of the deliverer. No one seems to know what his name means.

Two edges. The number two again. I am no expert on swords. I assume that a two-edged sword is better for stabbing than a single edged-sword. Emphasis here is that it is for a specific purpose to be used one time not in combat but for killing a man.

A cubit in length. Different commentators vary on how long the sword was. It varies from 12” to 18”. It apparently was long enough to go into an exceedingly fat man and protrude out the back such that “entrails” come out.

He strapped it on his right thigh under his cloak. The point is that the sword is hidden or concealed. This plays into the “concealed/secret message/word” in the following text. A “lefty” would draw a sword from his right side. If a guard were to check someone for a sword, he would look on the left side, assuming the person was right handed. Under his cloak indicates “concealed carry.”

Also, from what we read in Josephus, Eglon and Ehud were acquainted. Eglon’s servants apparently also trusted Ehud.

Judges 3:17 Then he presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.

Presented. This is the Hebrew word for approach or to come near. It sometimes has a spiritual connotation. Like in presenting a sacrifice. It is all through the book of Leviticus. This is not the word I expected to see based upon the English translation. This is perhaps another double entendre. He brought the tribute (minha) close but brought the sword/dagger closer and Eglon becomes the sacrifice (minha) presented to Yahweh.

Leviticus 1:1 Now the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying,

Leviticus 1:2 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When anyone of you brings (our word for presented) an offering (from the same root) to the Lord, you shall bring (our word presented again) your offering (our word presented again) of livestock from the herd or the flock.

Leviticus 1:3 If his offering (from the same root) is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer (our word) a male without defect; he shall offer (our word) it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, so that he may be accepted before the Lord.

The word for “present” the tribute definitely has theological flavoring.

Leviticus 2:1 ‘Now when anyone presents (our word) a grain (from same root as the word for “tribute” in our context) offering (from the same root as our word, a noun) as an offering (from the same root as our word, a noun) to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

The tribute. This tribute would have required a multitude of people to deliver grain, wine, and other foodstuffs. Perhaps something like a wagon train. We see this in verse 18 when Ehud dismissed the “people.” The word for people is sometimes used of a tribe or a nation. The Hebrew word for tribute is minha and just mentioned above. And again, this has theological flavoring as the word for “present” also does. It is in the passage just quoted from Leviticus 2:1. In the present context it is a double entendre. It is tribute to Eglon. But it is a sacrificial offering impoverishing the sons of Israel. But Eglon will become the sacrifice in a couple of verses.

Very fat. The quote from Robbie Dean quoted last week applies. He was an “exceedingly” fat man. Interesting double entendre. His name can mean calf or as Robbie Dean explained, fatted calf for sacrifice. He is also a man. There are two planes of meaning. One physical, earthly; the other is spiritual, heavenly. There is one we see. There is one we do not see. But the spiritual, the unseen, is the eternal reality. And as it says in

Zechariah 4:6 Then he said to me: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, and not by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts (armies).

The Judges text does not say where the tribute was presented.

Judges 3:18 And it came about, when he had finished presenting the tribute, that Ehud sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

When he had finished presenting the tribute. This is in the human, earthly realm. As such, what would have been Eglon's attitude? He was satisfied that it met his requirements, his standard so that he didn't go to war and destroy people and things. With malice of forethought, I would use the word "propitiated." Ehud, in the earthly realm had propitiated Eglon.

People. I like the idea of a multitude of people. This was not one or two men. This was a multitude of people that was required to provide the tribute to Moab.

Ehud sent away the people. He sent them on a mission, just as the sons of Israel had sent him on a mission in verse 15 (same root word). The mission they gave him was to deliver the tribute in the earthly realm. He now sends them to get ready for the coming battle which is part of the deliverance promised by God through Ehud, the spiritual realm. Yes, the battle is in the earthly realm. But, it is motivated by God and supported by God in the spiritual realm.

Why do I say things like this? Because the words are dual use. Some of you will understand the following illustration. In the defense industry, we know that the computers in some video games are high end processors. If these are networked together, you get a super computer which can be used for defense purposes. That is why there are export restrictions on some of them. They are dual purpose. A kid uses the processor to play a game. Hostile nations could use it to make war against us. Dual use. The words in this context can be dual use: spiritual and earthly. We saw this in John chapter 4.

Judges 3:19 But he himself turned back from the idols which were at Gilgal, and said, "I

have a secret message for you, O king.” And the king said, “Silence!” And all who were attending him left him.

This verse is a difficult one to fathom. Was Ehud at Gilgal? Where did he deliver the tribute? If you think he delivered the tribute at Jericho at the royal fort/palace, then how did he get to Gilgal? This is what the commentators seem to think. But what if Ehud delivered the tribute to Eglon's representatives at Gilgal and then left for Jericho (city of Palms)? This seems to make more sense to me. But, then the immediate conversation with Eglon seems rather abrupt with no transition.

He turned back from the idols. Now begins the spiritual thrust of the passage. Ehud is going to bring to fruition his mission from God.

Did you ever watch the movie, the Blues Brothers? They had a “mission from God.” Ehud has a mission from God. He turns his back on the idols that are apparently set up at Gilgal. But also remember, there were stones set up at Gilgal: one for each tribe of Israel to commemorate the crossing of the river Jordan. There is that double meaning again: idols of man, stones to commemorate the Work of God.

Let us read together Joshua chapter 4 and part of Joshua chapter 5. In order for you to understand this passage from a Hebrew mind, even in a little bit, you must understand the broader context.

Gilgal. As an introduction to the importance of Gilgal, let us read Joshua 4:1-5:12.

From Wikipedia:

“According to Joshua 4:19, Gilgal is a location "on the eastern border of Jericho" where the Israelites encamped immediately after crossing the Jordan River. There, they erected 12 stones as a memorial to the miraculous stopping of the river when they crossed. Joshua then ordered the Israelites who had been born during the Exodus to be circumcised at this spot. The Bible refers to this place as Givat Ha'aralot, then says that

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Joshua called the place Gilgal because, in his words, "today I have removed (galoti) the shame of Egypt from upon you."

From GotQuestions.org:

“Gilgal was a place of memorial. Gilgal is significant in the Bible as serving as a place of memorial for the Israelites, to remind them of what God had done. After miraculously crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the Israelites set up twelve stones taken from the river, representing the twelve tribes, to serve as a reminder to the children of Israel (Joshua 4:19–20). The stones at Gilgal would remind the Israelites and their descendants of the power of God and how He had dried up the Jordan River so they could walk through it, just as He had done to the Red Sea (Joshua 4:21–24). The stones at Gilgal would serve a teaching purpose to the younger generation, so that they too could remember what the Lord had done for them (Joshua 4:21–22).”

Summary: Gilgal had been the original staging point for Israel’s entry into the land. Josuah had set up 12 stones to remind the sons of Israel what God had done. But, someone also erected stone idols here. The sons of Israel forgot their God and in the very place that there is a memorial to God’s action, they set up idols to a lifeless god of stone. It is almost as if to say, “In your face,” to God. Now, they are again under slavery as they were in Egypt. Instead of bringing foodstuffs into Israel, the sons of Israel were forced to harvest their crops for the Moabites and send them possibly through Gilgal as a staging point for the Moabites. Everything is backwards. Remember when I taught Genesis chapter 34 how everything was upsdie down and backwards.

Secret message. “Secret: means concealed or hidden. “Message” is actually the word for “word.” Secret message is OK. But the important thing to remember is that Eglon is expecting a revelation of a hidden/concealed message from God whereas Ehud has a concealed message in the form of a sword. The message is death. Death for various reasons: a) he has cursed Israel (Numbers 24:9; Genesis 12:3) b) God has

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a covenant with the sons of Israel and although they have violated the covenant, God is faithful and will not let the sons of Israel disappear from history.

Silence. An interjection used as a command to keep silent. Something important is to follow. This word is used only eight times in the Old Testament (per Biblehub.com). One of those is in Zephaniah.

**Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord is near, Because the
Lord has prepared a sacrifice, He has
consecrated His guests.**

Unknowingly, Eglon, king of Moab, clears the room in preparation for his sacrifice. I understand this as a very solemn moment. The king is about to be killed as a sacrifice which will free the sons of Israel.

All who were attending him (Eglon). Literally, those standing, meaning attending to his wishes. Have you ever been at a four-star or even a five star restaurant. The waiters will stand around waiting to answer your slightest demand. But if you demand privacy, they will disappear quickly.

left him. So the intent of the command to silence was similar to “clear the room!”

**Judges 3:20 Then Ehud came to him while he
was sitting in his cool roof chamber alone.
And Ehud said, “I have a message from God
for you.” And he got up from his seat.**

Sitting. The root word was used throughout chapter 1 for the indigenous people living in the land.

Cool roof chamber. The roof chamber is actually a single word that means upper, as in upper room. So, roof chamber is a good translation. But it leaves something not said. A closed upper room in the summer is going to be hot. So the text adds, “cool.” In my experience in the Middle

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East, the houses will often have a flat roof that can be used for evening entertainment. Or for drying washed clothes during the day. There would be a stairs leading up to it. In this case, there was some kind of roof to protect the king from the sun. But there must have been an open wall or walls to allow a breeze. It might also allow a view of the surrounding area.

Here is what Thomas Constable says:

“The room in which Ehud met Eglon ("cool roof chamber," Heb. 'aliya; v. 20) was on an additional story raised above the flat roof of his house at one corner. Rooms built this way caught the prevailing currents of air, and therefore provided a cool place of retreat from the hot weather.”

Message from God. Again, “message” is “word.” Although message is OK, the double entendre is evident when this is translated “I have a word from God.” The Hebrew is literally, “Word of God to me for you.” Eglon is expecting a deep thought coming from God. Instead he gets a sword deep into his gut. It is obvious that Ehud is relating the sword to the Word of God. The similarity to Paul’s statement in Ephesians 6:17 is inescapable:

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

This begs the question, was this analogy original with Paul, or was this something already understood by the Jews because of this passage in Judges and perhaps others?

Judges 3:21 Then Ehud reached out with his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

This is a solemn moment. Ehud is about to kill the king who has enslaved his people. They have been enslaved for eighteen years. This one event

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changes history. Without the king to give commands, the army is caught off guard. But, Eglon the king has now become “him.”

An observation from a personal perspective. Perhaps you have seen on TV when a momentous thing is happening, the movie goes into slow motion. I can attest that this kind of thing actually happens in real life. Not often, but at moments of great importance to the mind.

I was driving to work one very icy December on Fort Meade. All of a sudden, a lady in an SUV pulls out in front of me from a side street. It appeared she thought she could pull in front of me and zoom off without me stopping. The road was so icy that a) she pulled out in front of me slower than she had predicted and b) Even though I slammed on the brake, all I did was swerve my car in a half circle and hit her SUV side to side. At the point I slammed on the brake, everything appeared to go into slow motion. This has been explained from the perspective of psychology in the journal *Psychology Today*:

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sense-time/201707/the-matrix-effect-when-time-slows-down>)

“What would be an explanation for this slow-motion effect? Obviously, physical time does not slow down. It is our experience that has changed. The standard explanation would be that the internal processes run faster in situations of “fight or flight.” Inasmuch as the brain works more quickly in a situation of danger, the world outside seems to be moving more slowly. The function of such acceleration is clear: When the organism processes environmental stimuli faster than usual, it enables one to respond more readily. Perceiving, thinking, and acting faster amounts to an advantage for survival. What goes on in the body and the brain in such situations has been worked out and summarized by the Finnish Philosopher Valteri Arstila in an article in *Frontiers in Psychology*. Accordingly, and in relation to the speeding neural and mental processes within the observer, external events relatively slow down.”

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This may have happened to Ehud. The Bible doesn't say nor would I have expected it to say. But this event is something that might fit that category of immanent danger.

Left hand. Remember, Ehud is "right hand restricted." He has been trained to use his left hand in combat.

Sword. The sword was designed for this moment, this one time use.

Right thigh. It does not say if the sword is on the outside, inside or on the posterior of the right thigh.

Thrust. It can mean thrust as a sword. The translation is fine. But imagine my surprise as the next use of this word. It can also mean to blow a trumpet as we will later in Judges 3:27. So Ehud thrusts the sword into Eglon, then he blows a trumpet to signal an attack or thrust into the forces of Moab. The author is again playing with words to show the leadership of Ehud.

Now I must quickly confess, that others think Ehud was corrupt to use Canaanite deception to kill or as some would say, murder Eglon. How can this be murder if the sons of Israel are fighting for their freedom the way the American colonists fought for their freedom from England. And this is sanctioned by God through raising/commissioning Ehud. And all the vocabulary suggesting this is similar to a sacrifice, although much of it backwards from a Levitical sacrifice.

Belly. This is the abdomen. This word is also used for a woman's womb.

Judges 3:22 The hilt of the sword also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade because he did not pull the sword out of his belly; and the refuse came out.

Hilt. The sword likely had a simple handle such that the entire sword would go into Eglon.

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Went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade. This may have been a thrust through the intestines (see next verse for “refuse.”). In order to kill Eglon quickly, the sword would likely have severed the aorta. So an upward thrust through the intestines and through the aorta or at least a branch of the aorta. The fat is pliant and could have been compressed while the sword was going in and popped out covering the hilt after Ehud let go.

Refuse came out. This is the contents of the intestines. Thomas Constable quotes Michael L. Barre:

"Thus by way of a humorous if vulgar twist, something unexpected 'comes out' of Eglon—his excrement. Such a grotesque occurrence would have been precisely the kind of detail that a story of this sort would have delighted in recounting and would be unlikely to omit. Although it no doubt strikes modern readers as vulgar and distasteful, in the context of the story it adds a note of extreme humiliation with respect to the Moabite king that would have delighted an Israelite audience, especially as it takes place at the very height of the drama: the national hero not only dispatched the enemy king with much cunning but in the process caused him to become besmirched with feces."

Judges 3:23 Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and locked them.

Vestibule. Per Robbie Dean

““Then Ehud went out into the vestibule” now we don't know what that is either, but in light of all the discussion here, that the slaves are outside and they think later on, they don't know what happened, they're going to think he's in the head (for you Navy guys), that he went to the rest room, they won't come in to the room. So Ehud goes out into the vestibule, and there's some indication that this word is not really a vestibule but some architectural feature probably related to the latrine, privy or the head. So

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what he does is that this is a private part of the throne room and he locks from the doors from the inside and then either escapes through some door inside the chamber, some other exit, or he goes on the roof and goes over the outside wall, but whatever the case, he manages to get out without anybody seeing him and he locks the doors from the inside.”

Judges 3:24 When he had left, the king’s servants came and looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked; and they said, “Undoubtedly he is relieving himself in the cool room.”

Relieving himself. The Hebrew uses a different euphemism to describe this: He (was) covering (participle) his feet (dual). Again, if I read Gesenius correctly, feet here is the “dual” plural for feet, meaning two feet. Our favorite word, two. The servants’ assumption may have been amplified by the smell of excrement from Eglon.

Judges 3:25 So they waited until it would have been shameful to wait longer; but behold, he did not open the doors of the roof chamber. So they took the key and opened them, and behold, their master had fallen to the floor dead.